



Castle Cary Town Council

The Market House

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APPROVED MINUTES OF CASTLE CARY TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

held on Monday 19th October 2020

DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS, THIS MEETING WAS HELD USING ZOOM.

Present: Judi Morison (Chair), Margaret Bebbington, Philippa Biddlecombe, Stephen Biddlecombe, Julian de Bosdari, Bob Gilbey, (from 19:08), Kenneth Gray, Pek Peppin, Sally Snook, Penny Steiner, Rob Worth (from 19:05)

Also present: District Councillors Henry Hobhouse and Kevin Messenger and Stephen Hill (Bruton Town Clerk)

Clerk: Zöe Godden

There was one members of the public present at the start of the meeting.

19:00 – The Chair allowed a public open session.

A representative from the Horsepond Group referred to a recent request from the group for permission to instal a fountain and electricity supply at the Horsepond, which had been refused by the Properties and Infrastructure Committee at its July 2020 meeting. Philippa Biddlecombe had spoken with the representative and said she would speak with the group again to agree how to proceed.

19:09 – Another member of the public joined the meeting.

19:10 – The Chair brought the public open session to a close and the two members of the public left the meeting.

The meeting started at 19:10

2020

TC68 Apologies for absence

No apologies had been received.

TC69 Declarations of personal or pecuniary interest (these must be declared BEFORE the agenda items concerned are discussed. Persons with a declared pecuniary interest must leave the meeting room when these are discussed)

There were no declarations of interest.

TC70 To approve the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Monday 21st September 2020, to be signed by the Chair at a later time.

Penny Steiner said that the Clerk had made a mistake in the minutes at item TC63 c). The new Tourism Leaflet would be funded, not just from earmarked reserves, but also from advertising revenue and from the SSDC tourism grant. The Clerk was instructed to correct the minutes accordingly.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed that, once the above correction had been made, the minutes were approved.

Action 201019/1: Town Clerk

TC71 Community Safety and Security update

Judi Morison reported that she and the Chair of Ansford Parish Council had released a joint statement as a result of increasing instances of anti-social behaviour at the Fairfield, Catherines Close, Donald Pither field, pre-school and Church porch. It had been suggested that the Town Council should write to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to highlight local Police staff shortages. It was **agreed** that Judi Morison should write to the PCC accordingly.

TC72 To receive any reports/updates:

- a) **Mike Lewis (County Councillor)** was not present.
- b) **Henry Hobhouse (District Councillor)** referred to the Government White Paper on reforms to the Planning process and said that that there would be a loss of democratic input if the changes were adopted. Areas identified as suitable for development would be allocated as either Growth, Renewal or Protected areas. Planning applications received for Growth areas would be decided without any input from Town or Parish Councils. Only a simple planning application would be required in Renewal areas. Any development in Protected areas would require a full planning application. The White Paper was not giving Planning Authorities adequate time to complete new Local Plans. Sally Snook noted that the Town Council had drafted a response to the White Paper and this would be dealt with later in the meeting.
Henry went on to speak about Local Government reorganisation for Somerset. The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government had written to Somerset County Council and the four District Councils to ask for the submission of business cases for a unitary model, which would include Bath and North East Somerset (BANES). Henry said that, if BANES were to be included, there would need to be at least two unitary authorities because the population count of Somerset and BANES combined would be too great to be served by one unitary authority.
- c) To receive an update the Dimmer Liaison Group – Sally Snook said that she would upload the latest information to the website.
- d) Update on Key Objectives/Projects – Judi Morison reported that the Chair of Bruton Town Council and a Bruton Councillor would be joining the joint Ansford and Castle Cary meeting on 22nd October to talk about the Solar Streets project. The Clerk reported that electricity to the ground floor of the Market House would be supplied by Ecotricity from November 2020.
- e) To review action points from previous meetings – There were no outstanding action points.

19:30 – Stephen Hill left the meeting.

TC73 Chairs' Report:

- a) To hear an update on One Somerset/Stronger Somerset.

Judi Morison reported she had attended a remote briefing held by SCC. It had been noted that more than one unitary would need to be formed in Somerset if BANES were to be included. There was concern that Town and Parish Councils would not have adequate resources to cope with the devolution of any services but reassurances were given that no Town or Parish Council would be forced to take on additional services if it was not able to.

- b) To note that the laying of wreaths for Remembrance Day will not be a public even this year due to the CV-19 situation.

Philippa Biddlecombe reported that there would be no Church service or parade through the town for Remembrance Day this year. Instead, there would be a closed wreath laying ceremony at the War Memorial, which would be organised by the British Legion and would be operated in a covid-safe manner. Only two representatives from each organisation would be able to attend to lay a wreath. Poppies would be sold in some shops and in the Undercroft but there would be no cash handling involved.

- c) To note that a "Library for All" project is being organised to be held in the Shambles.

Judi Morison reported that the project aimed to increase access to library books because only one person was able to enter the library at one time. Artifacts from the museum would be displayed. The Shambles would be set up in a covid-secure manner and would run on Fridays.

Judi went on to say that a job search service would be offered by LAMP on Wednesdays, also operating out of the Shambles. A chat-shop would run on Thursdays and, on Saturdays, young people would be able to browse and book out library books. These events would be advertised on the website in due course. They would run until Christmas and would then be reviewed.

- d) To note that a joint Castle Cary and Ansford Council meeting will be held on 21st October at 7pm on Zoom.

Noted.

- e) To note that an appeal has been submitted against the Environment Agency regarding non-determination of a permit application to vary conditions for a site at Hinkley Point C and to consider if the Council wishes to make any comment.

Sally Snook reminded Councillors that comments were made on the original application in July 2019. It was **agreed** that the Council did not wish to make any further comment.

There followed a discussion about the cleanliness of rivers in Somerset. Henry Hobhouse advised that it would be prudent to start water quality testing in the spring because higher water levels in rivers over winter would dilute any pollutants and skew results.

Committees Reports, Recommendations & Progress on Major Projects

TC74 Planning Committee & Neighbourhood Plan

- a) To hear an update on recently considered planning applications.

Sally Snook reported that Pek Peppin had stepped down as Chair of the Planning Committee and she had been nominated and approved as the new Chair. Kenneth Gray had been nominated and approved as the Vice-Chair.

Sally said that there had been only one planning application for consideration at the last Planning Committee meeting, which had been a S73 application at her own property and, as such, she had declared an interest. Judi Morison chaired that part of the meeting and Sally had left the Zoom meeting whilst voting took place.

Sally noted that the appeal on the BMI site (18/01602/FUL and 18/01603/LBC) appeared to be progressing and a site visit by the Planning Inspector was likely to take place soon.

Margaret Bebbington reported that a significant length of hedgerow had been removed on the boundary of the Well Farm site (13/03593/OUT and 15/03441/REM). Sally stated that she thought that this had been done to facilitate sewage connection to the site.

b) To note a response to the consultation on the “Planning for the Future” white paper. Sally Snook referred to a draft response that had been circulated to Councillors before the meeting. Sally thanked Kenneth Gray and Graham House for writing the draft.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve the response to the “Planning for the Future” white paper. The Clerk would print it out on headed paper and Judi Morison would sign it on behalf of the Council

Action 201019/1: Judi Morison & Town Clerk

TC75 Properties, Infrastructure, Pither Project & Fairfield-updates

a) To hear an update on works to Millbrook Toilets.

Bob Gilbey reported that the plastering and decoration had been completed and the electrician had finished the wiring. Next, the builder would carry out the stud work and install the toilet in the gents end of the building. When this had been completed, the floor would be finished with a latex levelling compound. Bob would do this work with the Caretaker. Quotes for replacement windows would be considered at an Extraordinary Properties and Infrastructure meeting on 26th October. In addition, Bob and the Caretaker would install loft insulation into the roof space. Finally, quotes for heating would need to be obtained. One quote had already been received from Mainstone Electrical, the company that had completed all other electrical work at the building.

b) To consider forming a Market House Development Group, to include Councillors, professional consultants and community members and which would be governed by suitable terms of reference and would report to the Full Council via the Properties and Infrastructure Committee.

Pek Peppin reported that the top floor of the Market House had unexpectedly become vacant, meaning that two sizable rooms were available for community use. No significant maintenance had been carried out for approximately 80 years. Pek referred to the Heritage Statement that she had submitted to Historic England and which had been circulated to Councillors before submission. Historic England had requested additional information, which Pek had provided. The Heritage Statement had then been approved by Historic England. To proceed with the development of the Market House, Pek said that an advisory group should be formed and that the group should include people with relevant expertise, including an architect, architectural historian, someone with knowledge of the planning system, someone with good knowledge of the Market House and possibly a wheelchair-user, to give advice about the proposed lift. Pek said that providing access to the upper floors was critical if the Council was to access grant funding for the proposed works. Following a meeting with an architect, it was felt that a lift would need to be located in the Shambles and then access the upper two floors by travelling outside the building. This was the only place that would give clear vertical access for a lift to all three floors.

20:05 – A member of the public joined the meeting.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed to form a Market House Development Group, which would be an advisory group, governed by terms of reference and reporting to the Town Council via the Properties and Infrastructure Committee.
10 votes for; One abstention.**

- c) To nominate a Chair of the Market House Development Group who will take on the project and see it through.

Judi Morison nominated Pek Peppin; the nomination was seconded by Penny Steiner.

It was **unanimously agreed** that Pek Peppin would Chair the Market House Development Group (MHDG).

Pek said that, because the installation of a disabled lift was a priority, there would be no need to install a stairlift at the rear of the building, as agreed at the March Properties and Infrastructure Committee meeting. Pek went on to say that the MHDG would need the backing of the community and asked Councillors for their support. Judi Morison said that an article could be put in the next newsletter to tell residents about the project.

Action 201019/2: Pek Peppin

TC76 Marketing & Communication

Item TC76 b) was dealt with at this point in the meeting.

- b) To note that the Big Christmas planning group advises that the event is cancelled this year due to the CV-19 situation and that the team will focus on promoting the High Street with local businesses.

Penny Steiner reported that the Big Christmas Planning Group had decided not to hold a Christmas event in the town this year due to the CV-19 situation. Instead, shops would be asked to promote a "Christmas is Coming" week to encourage people to do their Christmas shopping in Castle Cary. The Town Council would help to publicise this but would not be offering any funding.

- a) To consider a recommendation from the Finance and Management Committee that the Town Council allocates up to £1700.00 to pay for Christmas trees for the town, which can be met from current budgets and earmarked reserves.

Penny Steiner explained that, in previous years, shopkeepers on the high street had paid for their own Christmas trees. At the last Finance and Management Committee meeting on 12th October, Penny suggested that the Town Council should fund the supply, installation and lighting of all Christmas trees in the high street this year, in an attempt to make Christmas special in the town. Penny had spoken with the Chair of Ansford Parish Council, who had agreed that Ansford would meet one third of the cost. Pek Peppin asked if it would be made clear that this would be a one-off activity that would not be repeated in future years. Penny confirmed that this would be communicated to shopkeepers. Sally Snook asked if new lights were needed, as the Town Council already had several sets. Penny said that the current lights would be used but that they were four years old and additional sets might be needed to replace any no longer working. All lights supplied for the Christmas trees would be returned to the Town Council when the trees were taken down. Julian de Bosdari asked if the quotes were for supply of the trees only. Judi Morison said that the quotes were for supply, installation, decorating and disposal, in an environmentally friendly manner. Penny noted that the quotes would be considered at the Marketing and Communications Committee meeting on 26th October.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed that the Town Council would fund the supply, installation, decorating and disposal of Christmas trees for the high street, up to a cost of £1750.

TC77 Finance and Management

- a) To note that the Clerk, in conjunction with the Chair, has purchased a laptop for the Marketing and Communications Administrator at a cost of £440.00, in line with Financial Regulation 4.1.

Noted.

- b) To note receipt of the second half of the 2020-21 precept from SSDC of £84382.50.

Noted.

- c) To consider a recommendation from the Finance and Management committee that the Full Council approves the draft 2021-22 budget as presented.

The Clerk explained that the Chairs of each committee, except the Planning Committee, had reviewed the draft budget and that their requested amendments had been incorporated into the draft. The Planning Committee budget was a single line and did not require detailed review by the Chair of the Planning Committee. The amended draft budget was then considered by the Finance and Management Committee on 12th October, when the Clerk explained the layout of the draft budget sheet and went through the figures, taking any questions from Councillors.

The Clerk asked if anyone had any questions about the budget but there were none.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve the budget for 2021-22 as presented.

- d) To consider accepting an offer of S106 funding from SSDC of £87865.00 and agree two councillors to sign the acceptance paperwork.

Judi Morison asked for thanks to be formally recorded to SSDC for arranging for the total of the S106 allocation for changing rooms and play equipment from the Well Farm development to be paid over to Castle Cary and Ansford Councils. Judi reported that, while the funds were being paid to Castle Cary Town Council, they were for the benefit of Ansford and Castle Cary residents using the Pavilion and Catherines Close play area.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to accept the offer of S106 funding and that Judi Morison and Penny Steiner would sign the paperwork.

Action 201019/3: Judi Morison & Penny Steiner

- e) To approve the cash book and bank reconciliation for the current account for September 2020, for the deposit account for the period from July to September 2020 and for the Triodos account to 1st October 2020.

All bank reconciliations had been checked by Kenneth Gray before the meeting and found to be correct.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve the cash book and bank reconciliation for the current account for September 2020, for the deposit account for the period from July to September 2020 and for the Triodos account to 1st October 2020.

- f) To approve the cashbook and bank reconciliation for the Donald Pither Trust for September 2020.

The bank reconciliation had been checked by Kenneth Gray before the meeting and found to be correct.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve the cashbook and bank reconciliation for the Donald Pither Trust for September 2020.

20:33 – District Councillor Henry Hobhouse left the meeting.

- g) To approve the October 2020 payment schedule for the Town Council and the Donald Pither Trust and to nominate Councillors to verify and authorise payments.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve all payments; it was further unanimously agreed that Margaret Bebbington would verify the payments and that Penny Steiner would authorise the payments after verification. The Town Clerk would email copies of all invoices to Margaret and Penny.

TC78 Exclusion of Press and Public

To consider exemption of press and public for remainder of meeting under Public Bodies Admissions To Meetings Act 1960, Section 1 (2) on the grounds that discussion of the following business is likely to disclose confidential information relating to the engagement of an employee and is likely to disclose confidential information

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to exclude the press and public for the remainder of the meeting.

20:36 – District Councillor Kevin Messenger left the meeting.

TC78 Recruitment

- a) To note that the new Town Clerk will start work for the Town Council on 21st December and that the Finance and Management Committee has agreed to seek a locum Clerk to cover the role in the meantime.

Noted. The new Clerk would take up her post on 21st December. It had been agreed at the Finance and Management Committee meeting on 12th October that a locum Clerk could be employed to cover the period between the current Clerk leaving on 31st October and the new Clerk starting on 21st December. Judi Morison reported that she and Penny Steiner would be meeting with the Clerk and Assistant Clerk from Bruton Town Council, who had expressed an interest in acting as locum Clerks during that time.

- b) To consider paying the current Clerk in lieu of annual leave not taken.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to pay the current Clerk in lieu of any annual leave not taken.

TC79 Dance Studio Licence

To note the status of the Dance Studio licence.

Judi Morison reported that, at the Finance and Management Committee meeting on 12th October, it had been agreed to ask the Council's solicitor to write to the previous occupier of the Dance Studio to reiterate the request for payment of rent for the first two quarters of the financial year and the electricity costs incurred during that time.

The meeting ended at 20:46.

Members of the Council are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of its functions, that "No member of the public, job applicant, elected member or employee shall receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, race, sexual orientation, marital status or disability"

The next meeting of the Town Council will be held on Monday 16th November 2020 at 7:00pm. Any items for inclusion on the agenda should be forwarded to the Town Clerk by Thursday 5th November 2020.